

DATeline NO. 71 WASHINGTON
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OPENING DOORS TO A PRODUCTIVE LIFE
(INSERTS IN TAPE LIBRARY)

ANNCR: AND NOW THE VOICE OF AMERICA PRESENTS DATeline...

ANOTHER IN THE SERIES OF PROGRAMS ABOUT PEOPLE,
PLACES AND EVENTS IN THE UNITED STATES. TODAY,
OUR DATeline IS WASHINGTON, D.C. WE VISIT AN
EXPERIMENTAL LABORATORY WHERE PEOPLE TOTALLY
DEPENDENT ON THEIR FAMILIES AND SOCIETY ARE
GIVEN HOPE AND SHOWN WAYS TO BECOME SELF-
SUPPORTING.

NARR: DON WOODRUFF A 29-YEAR-OLD RESIDENT OF WASHINGTON,
D.C. NEVER WORKED A DAY IN HIS LIFE. NOW, HE EARNS
8,700 DOLLARS A YEAR AS AN INSURANCE CLAIMS ADJUSTER.
IT IS NOT AN UNUSUAL STORY--EXCEPT FOR THE FACT THAT
DON WOODRUFF IS THE VICTIM OF A SEVERELY DISABLING
FORM OF PARALYSIS. FROM HIS WHEELCHAIR, HE TALKS
INTO A TELEPHONE HEADSET HELD BY AN ADJUSTABLE DEVICE.
HE USES A TAPE RECORDER TO TAKE STATEMENTS OF
AUTOMOBILE ACCIDENTS OVER THE PHONE. DON WORKS FOUR
DAYS A WEEK FROM HIS HOME, THEN HE GOES TO THE OFFICE
TO TALK WITH HIS SUPERVISORS. HE IS ONE OF THE
HANDICAPPED PEOPLE IN THE WASHINGTON, D.C., AREA,
WHO WERE CONSIDERED UNEMPLOYABLE, BUT THANKS TO THE
JOB DEVELOPMENT LABORATORY AT THE GEORGE WASHINGTON
UNIVERSITY, THEY CAN NOW EARN THEIR LIVING. THIS
LABORATORY IS A SMALL SCALE EXPERIMENTAL PROJECT,

NARR: TAKING SUPPOSEDLY HOPELESS CASES AND DEMONSTRATING
(CONT) THAT THEY CAN BECOME PRODUCTIVE, THAT THERE ARE WAYS
OF HELPING THEM.

TAPE: CUT ONE -- MALLIK

"THE MAIN FUNCTION OF THE JOB DEVELOPMENT LABORATORY IS TO TAKE THE MOST SEVERELY HANDICAPPED PEOPLE, PEOPLE WHO'VE NEVER BEEN EXPOSED TO TRAINING, VOCATIONAL TRAINING, OR JOB PLACEMENT. THESE KINDS OF PEOPLE WE TAKE, AND WE GIVE THEM ALL KINDS OF SUPPORT, LIKE TRAINING, ENVIRONMENTAL MODIFICATION AND JOB FINDING, AND WE PLACE THESE PEOPLE IN THE JOBS."

NARR: THIS WAS KALISANDAR MALLIK, DIRECTOR OF THE JOB DEVELOPMENT LABORATORY. HE CAME TO THE UNITED STATES FROM INDIA SEVEN YEARS AGO AS A YOUNG PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER TO FURTHER HIS EDUCATION. STUDYING FOR A MASTER'S DEGREE IN BIO-MEDICAL ENGINEERING AT THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY, HE BECAME INVOLVED WITH A NEW RESEARCH PROJECT FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF VOCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES OF SEVERELY DISABLED PEOPLE. MALLIK FOUND IT VERY STIMULATING TO RESEARCH NEW TRAINING METHODS, TOOL ADJUSTMENT AND CHANGING THE ENVIRONMENT TO MAKE HANDICAPPED PEOPLE CAPABLE OF EARNING A LIVING. HE STAYED WITH THE PROJECT AND IN TIME BECAME DIRECTOR OF THE LABORATORY.

TAPE: CUT TWO -- MALLIK

"IT IS A RESEARCH AND DEMONSTRATION PROJECT...TO PROVE THAT MOST SEVERELY HANDICAPPED PEOPLE ARE CAPABLE TO CONTRIBUTE IN THE SOCIETY. WE PLACED SO FAR ALMOST 75 TO 80 PEOPLE IN LAST FOUR YEARS. THESE PEOPLE NEVER WORKED A SINGLE DAY AND THEY NEVER EARNED, MOST OF THE TIME, A SINGLE PENNY IN THEIR LIFE. NOW, THEY ARE EARNING ANYWHERE BETWEEN 5,000 TO 14,000 DOLLARS A YEAR. NOW, THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROGRAM: TRAINING COST,

TAPE: ENVIRONMENTAL MODIFICATION COST AND EVERYTHING ARE
(CONT) VERY LITTLE IN COMPARISON TO THE RETURN WE ARE
GETTING THROUGH THEM... ONCE THEY START EARNING,
THEY NO LONGER RECEIVE THE PUBLIC WELFARE OR SOCIAL
SECURITY BENEFIT FROM THE GOVERNMENT. MOREOVER, THEY
CONTRIBUTE TO THE GOVERNMENT IN TERMS OF THEIR TAX
RETURNS."

NARR: THE LABORATORY STAFF CONSISTS OF THE HIGHLY QUALIFIED
AND DEDICATED PEOPLE: A DESIGNING ENGINEER, VOCATIONAL
COUNSELOR, OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST, ORTHOPEDIC,
RECREATIONAL THERAPIST, PSYCHOLOGIST, TWO SOCIAL
WORKERS AND TWO SECRETARIES. THEY TAKE CARE OF ABOUT
A HUNDRED DISABLED PERSONS A YEAR. THE UNIVERSITY
PROVIDES FACILITIES. IN ADDITION, THE PROJECT IS
FUNDED BY SEVERAL WELFARE AND REHABILITATION INSTITUTIONS.

TAPE: CUT THREE -- MALLIK

"WE TAKE THE CLIENT, THEN WE EXPERIMENT WITH THE CLIENT...
ARE THEY INDEPENDENT WITH THEIR ACTIVITIES OF DAILY
LIVING, LIKE DRESSING, HYGIENE, FEEDING...AND THEN WE
SEE WHAT ARE THEIR MENTAL CAPABILITIES, WHAT KIND OF
TASK THEY CAN PERFORM? FROM THERE WE TRY TO SET UP
SOME KIND OF A PROGRAM."

NARR: THE CANDIDATES ARE RECOMMENDED BY REHABILITATION
CENTERS. IN THE BEGINNING, SOME ARE AFRAID OF LOSING
THEIR FINANCIAL BENEFITS. BUT SOON, THEY SEE THAT
INSTEAD THEY ARE GAINING MUCH MORE, NOT ONLY IN MONEY,
BUT SELF-ESTEEM AND INDEPENDENCE. OFTEN IT IS ALSO
NECESSARY TO CONVINCE THE FAMILY THAT SOMEONE, WHO WAS
TOTALLY DEPENDENT FOR THIRTY OF MORE YEARS CAN BE TRAINED
FOR COMPUTER PROGRAMMING, KEYPUNCHING, MICROFILMING,
ABSTRACTING, STATISTICAL ANALYSIS, UPDATING COMPUTER
FILES AND MANY OTHER TASKS.

TAPE: CUT FOUR -- MALLIK

"MOST OF OUR CLIENTS, THEY ARE FUNCTIONALLY QUADRIPLAGIC, HAVING PARALYSIS IN FOUR EXTREMITIES. THEY HAVE NO FUNCTION IN THE LOWER EXTREMITIES. THEY ARE IN A WHEEL-CHAIR... MOST OF THESE PEOPLE, THEY HAVE LIMITED USE OF UPPER EXTREMITIES. WE TRY TO DESIGN AN ENVIRONMENT SO THAT THEY CAN BECOME PRODUCTIVE. MANY OF OUR CLIENTS, THEY WORK FROM THEIR HOME FULL TIME. MANY OF OUR CLIENTS GO ON THE JOB SITE AND WORK."

NARR: ALTHOUGH THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 REQUIRES ALL FIRMS WITH LARGER FEDERAL CONTRACTS TO HIRE SOME HANDICAPPED PEOPLE, IT TAKES SOME CONVINCING BEFORE THE EMPLOYER WANTS TO TRY EXTREME CASES. MALLIK TRAVELS ALL OVER THE COUNTRY IN SEARCH OF NEW IDEAS FOR TRAINING AND ENVIRONMENTAL ADJUSTMENT AND FOR FIRMS WILLING TO MODIFY THEIR JOBS FOR DISABLED WORKERS. HE ASKS EMPLOYERS OF EXACT REQUIREMENTS. IF NECESSARY, SPECIAL TOOLS, DEVICES OR TABLES ARE DESIGNED FOR THE USE OF THE HANDICAPPED PERSON. AFTER A SUITABLE CANDIDATE IS TRAINED, THE EMPLOYER IS INVITED TO TEST HIM. IF HE FINDS HIM CAPABLE, HE IS ASKED TO HIRE HIM FIRST FOR A PROBATION PERIOD.

JOB DEVELOPMENT LABORATORY PROVES OVER AND OVER AGAIN THAT WITH SOME GOOD WILL, EVEN THOSE CAN BE HELPED WHO ARE EASILY WRITTEN OFF BY THE SOCIETY.

ANNCR: THIS HAS BEEN DATELINE, ANOTHER IN THE SERIES OF VOA PROGRAMS ABOUT PEOPLE, PLACES AND EVENTS HERE IN THE UNITED STATES. TODAY, YOU HEARD ABOUT THE JOB

ANNCR: DEVELOPMENT LABORATORY FOR THE HANDICAPPED PEOPLE.
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NEXT _____ (AT THIS TIME) ANOTHER ...DATELINE.

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